

to uphold that law, regardless of what pressure is politically applied upon the administration by any one group or number of groups or any one individual or group of individuals.

So I wanted to put this in the RECORD so there was no misunderstanding about what the Congress had done, what the President had signed into law, and what the current law of the land is. This was the result of extensive—perhaps some of the most extensive—hearings the Senate Armed Services Committee has ever held. There were hundreds of witnesses, thousands of pages of testimony, site visits, testimony from people on all sides of the issue, representing every perspective. This was a carefully fashioned conclusion that was presented, approved by the committee, presented to the Congress and overwhelmingly approved by the Congress on a bipartisan basis, sent to the White House and signed into law by the President.

I think it would behoove the President and the people speaking for him to understand clearly what this law is and to fulfill their constitutional responsibilities to uphold the law and not make vague clarifications of statements and policies simply because one or more particular group protested their particular position on the issue.

I yield the floor.

GLACIER BAY MANAGEMENT

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have one more item, relating to legislation addressing several important aspects of the administration and management of Glacier Bay National Park in my State of Alaska.

As many of you know, Glacier Bay National Park, west of Juneau in southeastern Alaska, has been named as the No. 1 national park in our country's National Park System. It is a unique tourist destination. It can only really be reached by cruise ship. The season runs roughly from Memorial Day to Labor Day, the season for the cruise ships that visit southeastern Alaska.

For the most part, these are the same ships that traverse the Caribbean in the wintertime, then move to Vancouver, BC, in order to sail to Alaska in the summer. There are probably 30 ships. I believe the number of tourists who visit Alaska by cruise ship is somewhere in the area of 600,000 in that short 90-day period.

Because of the popularity of this unique tourist destination, the legislation I have introduced would encourage the continuation of the Park Service's ongoing efforts to work with concession operators to try to improve visitor services, as well as deal fairly and finally with the longstanding dispute over the status of the commercial and subsistence fishing that has gone on in that park from time immemorial.

The footprint that any of these activities leaves in this park is pretty insignificant in relationship to other

parks, because the park is seen, for the most part, by visitors on a cruise ship. You might get an occasional candy wrapper blown overboard, but the ships are very good at keeping their impact to a minimum. The point is, compared to impressions left in other national parks by visitors, the footprint left by visitors who come to the park on a ship—and never get off—is extremely small. That's part of what makes the park so unique—access by cruise ship.

In any event, this bill reflects the progress of several years of discussion with local interests and the Park Service. The efforts, I think, are positive. But we have been hampered from achieving consensus by some groups who seem to be unwilling to compromise for reasons we can only guess at—perhaps they don't want to see other visitors during that short summer season.

Insofar as possible, this bill represents an attempt to stake out some reasonable, responsible middle ground that would respect the wishes of all concerned. The issue of commercial fishing is one where, historically, fishermen have plied the waters of Glacier Bay and the outer coast, the Gulf of Alaska area now included in the park, for over 100 years. Local Native villagers, the Huna Tlingit people, have been doing so for thousands of years. At no time have their activities damaged the park or its resources, nor have they harmed the area's wild and scenic qualities in any way. Their presence has provided a colorful backdrop to the mystique of the park, as a matter of fact. This simple fact I don't think can be overemphasized.

To put it another way, commercial fishing and local villagers have continually fished in Glacier Bay since long before it became a park or a monument. The fact that we value it so highly today is proof that they have not had an adverse impact on the species in the bay. Unfortunately, some interests do not seem to be concerned about fairness, or the obligation to the Native people of Alaska, and would like to see fishing and gathering banned, no matter how environmentally benign or how critical to the local livelihoods it may be.

On subsistence, this bill corrects inconsistencies in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, known as ANILCA. Villagers living near Glacier Bay, whose ancestors have used the bay continually for at least 9,000 years, must be allowed to continue to use the bay's resources to feed their families, to fish for halibut, salmon, crabs, collect clams, seaweeds, berries, and other foods that are part of their traditional culture.

Let me emphasize, we are talking about a relative handful of families—most from the local Native village of Hoonah, which has a population of about 900 or so, and a few people from other nearby communities such as Elfin Cove, Gustavus, and Pelican. We are not talking about thousands of peo-

ple. These Alaskans do not have the convenience of supermarkets or strip malls. They deserve consideration and respect. They deserve to have their historic use recognized and provided for by this Congress.

My bill also addresses commercial fishing in the park. For generations, commercial fishermen caught salmon, halibut and crabs in Glacier Bay and have fished the rich grounds of the outside coast as well. And there is no biological reason, none whatsoever, for restricting commercial fishing activity anywhere in the park. The fishery resources are healthy, they are diverse, they are closely monitored by the State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and they are very carefully regulated. It should also be noted that, of the park's approximately 3 million acres of marine waters, only about 500,000 are productive enough to warrant real, significant interest.

There are few anadromous streams in the park—that's streams where the salmon go up and spawn—because most of the fresh water that comes down comes down from the glaciers and there is simply no place for the salmon to spawn.

In any event, the fisheries are restricted both as to method as in the number of participants, and are carefully managed and controlled to assure continued abundance. There is nothing in the bill and there is no desire by the fishing industry to change these controls or increase the level of this sustainable activity. Alaska is a very careful steward of its resources. Commercial fishing does not harm the environment in any way. In spite of what you hear, Alaska fisheries are in very good shape. We have had record runs 8 of the last 11 years. Under Federal management, things got so bad there was one year when we only took 25 million salmon, but when we became a State that began turning around. I think last year we put up 218 million. That's because we don't open our season until we have had adequate escapement, that is, enough fish to go up the streams to spawn so that we are guaranteed renewability of the resource.

So, in the grand scheme of things, and recognizing consideration of the Nation's economy, these fisheries are small potatoes. But to the fishermen, the natives who depend upon them, to the families of small remote communities in which they live, these fisheries are of the utmost importance. They are harm free. And those who partake in them deserve this Government's help, not the destruction of their simple lifestyle.

This bill authorizes traditional fishing throughout the park for subsistence users as well as historical commercial activities. However, because there are special, sensitive areas inside Glacier Bay itself, it also designates the waters inside the bay as a special

reserve, in which a joint team of Federal and State scientists will make recommendations on where fishing should occur and at what level.

A further special provision is also included in one area where there is significant potential for conflict between fishermen and certain limited non-motorized uses, such as kayaking, during the brief 3-month summer period.

This area is in the Beardslee Islands, near the entrance of the bay. Under this bill, the only commercial fishing that would be allowed in the Beardslees would be crab fishing, and that only in a very small area, by a very small number of people who historically are dependent on this fishing—less than a dozen people. This would only include people who can show both a significant history of participation and a real dependence on that fishery for their livelihoods. This privilege could be transferred to one successor, when the original fisherman retires, but will cease after that. And at any point the Park Service could eliminate all fishing in the Beardslees with a fair payment to the individual fisherman.

The reason for such a special rule in the Beardslees is simply that these fishermen have no other option than fishing in the Beardslees, due to the small size of their vessels and their reliance on this one fishery, and a few other factors.

So this bill will not contribute to any increase in fishing. In fact, over time the opposite may occur. It will simply provide for the scientifically sound continuation of an environmentally benign activity. Finally, I think it's important also to note that the continuation of both subsistence and commercial fishing enjoys wide support from local residents of Southeastern Alaska, including environmental groups such as the Southeastern Alaska Conservation Council.

I look to my colleagues for support on the merits of the bill.

Mr. President, I see no other Senators in the Chamber. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLARD). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, we had a very unfortunate story appear in the Washington Post this morning by Helen Dewar.

The first paragraph:

President Clinton had "some choice words" about the pace of Senate action on administration nominations during a Wednesday night meeting with Senate Democrats.

And then it quotes our distinguished minority leader:

Daschle estimated there are 30 ambassadorial nominations awaiting action for countries that, according to a Senate list, include Britain, France, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Bosnia and, as of Tuesday, Mexico.

This is ill-placed and irresponsible criticism and does not serve the efficient management of these nominations. I read the article while I was conducting a hearing that we had hurried to deal with the nomination of the Ambassadors for Guyana and Paraguay. I have just left a meeting with the potential nominee for Ambassador to France, and I spent the better part of the last month doing everything we might do to get our Ambassador to Canada, which, I might add, has been without an ambassador for over a year and a half. We just received the nomination for that Ambassador on July 2—July 2—of this year. The vacancy began in April 1996—Canada. And there have been extended vacancies in Germany, Moscow, et cetera.

To clarify, this year, we have had 56 nominations received by the Foreign Relations Committee; 14 have been confirmed, 9 are pending on the Executive Calendar; 33 are pending in the committee. That sounds like a lot. But the issue is, 26 of the 44 we have just received in the last month. I repeat, there are 44 pending in the committee; 26 of them we have just gotten.

The problem here is not in the Senate, nor is it in the Foreign Relations Committee. The problem with ambassadorial nominations is at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue.

I point out that Tokyo has been vacant since December, and we have no nominee. South Korea has been vacant since December, and we have no nominee. These are not just incidental relationships, I might add. We are talking about Japan and South Korea.

So, Mr. President, I think those were unfortunate words, and they paint an improper and inappropriate picture, and they do not help anything. I assume they are just ill-informed. But when you are going to make accusations of this kind, and you are the President of the United States, the word travels far. I think it would be more prudent to have your own description of the condition before you start hurling spears, because this kind of thing only confuses the process and makes the work of both the Senate and the administration much more complicated.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMBASSADORIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, partisan politics, I guess, is a game like foot-

ball, baseball, or checkers, and that game has, no doubt, been played in the Senate for as long as there has been a Senate. In it, you win some, you lose some, and, as the saying goes, some are rained out. It has been suggested from time to time that maybe a time or two I have played a little bit of it myself, and I plead nolo contendere to the suggestion.

But the game, it seems to me, that the distinguished minority leader, Mr. DASCHLE, has been playing of late has sometimes been marked by a rather interesting degree of misstatements of fact—unintentional, I'm sure—and curious conclusions. That, too, has not been unknown heretofore in the history of the Senate. And I do not suggest that the minority leader's misstatements or insinuations are deliberate, and I am willing to assume that his errors are accidental and unintentional.

Just the same, my observations this afternoon are based on my incredulous reaction early this morning when I read an article in the Washington Post, page A21, under a headline reading "Confirmation Process Frustrates President." That was, of course, Mr. Clinton, with whom Senator DASCHLE says he met this past Wednesday night. It indicates that Senator DASCHLE confided to the Washington Post's very competent reporter, Helen Dewar, that—and I quote from Ms. Dewar's story—"The President . . . expressed probably the highest level of exasperation I've heard him express on the subject, Daschle said, making clear that he (Senator DASCHLE) shares Clinton's frustration."

Further, according to Ms. Dewar's report, "[Senator] Daschle estimated that there are 30 ambassadorial nominations awaiting action for countries that, according to a Senate list, include Britain, France, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Bosnia, and, as of Tuesday, Mexico."

Well, Mr. President, if Mr. Clinton and Mr. DASCHLE are suffering their "highest levels of exasperation," and if the President uttered the "choice words" attributed to him by Senator DASCHLE regarding the work of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, then I suggest that both gentlemen dismount their high horses, examine the true facts, and correct their joint misstatements about the excellent work of the Foreign Relations Committee, which I have the honor of serving as chairman, with Senator JOE BIDEN as the ranking member.

What the President is purported to have implied—and Mr. DASCHLE says he agrees with it—is nonsense, I say respectfully; it is nonsense regarding the work and cooperation of the staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, of which Adm. "Bud" Nance is the Chief of Staff. Bud Nance is among the top chiefs of staff ever to serve the Senate's committees, and I believe Mr. Clinton's State Department will join